

TOPIC: REVISIONS TO THE WICHE PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PSEP) POLICY

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I. SUMMARY

This agenda item recommends a policy change to add two in-region institutions for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). The PSEP is designed to allow Colorado residents to attend programs in optometry school at participating WICHE institutions.

II. BACKGROUND

In 1978 the Colorado State Legislature appropriated funds to assist Colorado residents in their study of optometry at schools participating in the WICHE student exchange program. The legislature has continued to provide funding for the program since the State of Colorado does not have an educational institution providing an optometry program, but does have a recognized need for professionals in this field.

The PSEP makes it possible for states to assure that their students have access to professional education at reasonable tuition rates without the expense of establishing programs in their own state institutions. This access to optometry school is achieved through providing support fees to students, allowing them to attend out-of-state institutions at a comparable in-state rate.

WICHE has approved two additional in-region schools (November 2009) Midwestern University and Western University of Health Sciences. There are now four in-region institutions that participate in the program. Staff recommendation is to revise the policy to be updated with the additional institutions.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission approve the changes to the WICHE PSEP as in the attached Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Student Services Policies, Section VI, Part E.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-1-112:

The State of Colorado is a member of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and is given responsibility to administer the program for the State of Colorado.